

Use media to boost your business



By [Abram Molelemane](#)

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The media has long been a powerful tool for marketing and growing your business.

My experience as a media coordinator at [Fetola](#), where a lot of my job entails developing media coverage for the businesses we mentor and support, has made me aware of just how highly effective and imperative the media has become in marketing businesses and helping them grow.

Not only does positive media coverage promote your business and help improve sales or fundraising success as a result, but it can also turn your organisation into a recognised brand and give it credibility. Those days of handing out flyers or putting up posters to advertise your business or products are so passé! The media has become the modern way of spreading the word- it's quick, effective, and above all it can reach a huge audience in one go.

Let media be your means

In truth, these days if you really want to grab the attention of the public and deliver your message to your target audience, the use of the media is the way to go. With busy schedules that people have, some no longer have time to spend hours searching for products or services that will interest them. You have to find a more unique marketing approach in order for people to be reminded of the existence of your business despite their busy lives.

Fetola offers business support and enterprise development services, and my work requires me to communicate with programme participants frequently especially when I am writing an article about their businesses or when I call to inform them that an article about their business has been published. The feedback I get is always the same - when their organisation gets media coverage, it often results in emails or phone calls flooding in from potential customers or funders enquiring about their business, services and products.

More potential business thanks to media exposure

I'll cite an example of one of our programme participants. Paula Maleka is the founder and owner of Fountain of Beauty, a township-based beauty parlour in Sebokeng. I was able to assist her in getting an article about an entrepreneurial award she won into certain industry-specific publications, as well as the local community papers. Since Paula's business received this media coverage, she has had numerous calls and emails from different people either wishing to buy her products or wanting to partner with her - she was also able to secure a new beauty franchise and grow her product offering as a direct result of this media success.

When I say media coverage, I mean making yourself part of the story in the professional media-coverage in television newscasts, newspapers, and on radio programs. Usually when the discussion of the small business sector and how it can utilise the media pops up, it usually has to do with how to market your business via social media, and that is an important subject on its own. However, it is still important that you still acquaint your business with professional media such as newspapers, radio and television, don't ignore it! Just look at how politicians make use of these channels during campaigns, and how it (usually) works for them. Imagine what it can do for your business if properly managed.

Get to know your media, be there for them

As part of the [Legends programme](#) (an enterprise development and business support programme we run that is funded by Old Mutual and others), we manage an e-learning course for our participants where they get the opportunity to learn about the important role the media plays in helping businesses grow, whether they are for-profit or non-profit organisations. Here

are some of the tips we've shared with them:

- Get to know the media that are most likely to cover your business/organisation (read and watch the media in your local area), and make a list of all relevant publications and magazines and develop contacts with the people at these organisations (editor, news editor, chief journalists etc.).
- Get to know reporters and editors personally, drop off some printed material or personally deliver that press release instead of mailing or emailing it.
- Always give the media information that is fresh, newsworthy and relevant to their readers - the media are not there to promote your business that is what paid advertising is for. They want interesting content that their audience will enjoy.
- Develop a "virtual" media kit, including the history of your business, its vision, mission and goals, along with brief profiles and photos of key staff and related stakeholders, the most recent news releases, and any recent awards or accolades.
- Make yourself available to the media at any time, give them a home or cell number where they can reach you day and night if necessary.

With that in mind, just last year alone we managed to get over R6m worth of media coverage for our Legends participants, which has helped them in turn to boost sales, develop new partnerships and make some great new contacts.

However, it's no lie that getting media coverage for your business can be challenging, takes some forethought, and can also be costly. To assist you, I share below some tips from the web as to how to utilise the media at little or no cost apart from time, enthusiasm and focus:

[How to get free media coverage for you and your business...](#)

[5 FM's mind your business](#)

[8 Ways to Get Media Coverage \(Without a Press Release\) - Publicity and PR Strategies](#)

[How to get free "media coverage" for your business](#)

[Top Ten Ways to Get Media Coverage for Your Business!](#)

ABOUT ABRAM MOLELEMANE

Abram Molelemane is a journalism graduate at the Tshwane University of Technology. In 2011 he was nominated for the Record print journalist of the year award. He is currently employed as the media officer at Fetola.

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